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TAGS: [UNGA](#) [UNSC](#) [PREL](#) [AORC](#)
SUBJECT: IRAN LOSES RESOUNDINGLY IN SECURITY COUNCIL
MEMBERSHIP BID

Classified By: Ambassador Alejandro Wolff for reasons 1.4 (b,d)

¶1. (U) Summary: Iran polled a mere 32 votes from the 192-member UN General Assembly in its failed bid for a Security Council seat over Japan. Austria, Japan, Mexico, Turkey, and Uganda were elected in first round balloting. End Summary.

¶2. (U) In one round of balloting October 17, the UN General Assembly elected Austria, Japan, Mexico, Turkey, and Uganda to serve as non-permanent members of the Security Council for two-year terms starting on January 1, 2009. They will replace Belgium, Indonesia, Italy, Panama, and South Africa upon the expiration of their terms on the 15-member body at the end of 2008.

¶3. (U) Detailed results:

Ballot A: African and Asian Candidatures
valid ballots: 191 (not including 1 abstention)
2/3 threshold: 128

Uganda	181 (was endorsed by its regional group)
Japan	158
Iran	32
Madagascar	1 (had withdrawn prior to the election)

Ballot B: Latin American and Caribbean Candidatures
valid ballots: 186 (not including 6 abstentions)
2/3 threshold: 124

Mexico	185 (was endorsed by its regional group)
Brazil	1 (was not a declared candidate)

Ballot C: Western European and other States Candidatures
valid ballots: 192
2/3 threshold: 128

Turkey	151
Austria	133
Iceland	87
Australia	1 (was not a declared candidate).

¶4. (C) Iran at 32 votes fell far short not only of victory, but of the 57 possible votes of the member states of the Organization of the Islamic Conference, and the 65 votes that would have blocked a 2/3 result by Japan. (The current OIC chair, the Ugandan Permanent Representative, confidentially

predicted last week that the OIC would be split in its support of Iran.) Nonetheless, Japan had feared a larger Iranian vote and campaigned hard. It took nothing for granted right up to the balloting, reminding that it is the second largest contributor to UN budgets and has provided human resources to eight peace operations. Japan has served on the Security Council for 18 years since its admission to the UN in 1956. Mongolia had withdrawn from the race in January 2007 when Japan announced its candidacy, clearing the way for what many had hoped would eventually result in an endorsed slate.

15. (C) Iran announced its candidacy in September 2007, relatively late in the process. Its argument was for sub-regional rotation on the Council to counter a 10th term for Japan. Iran was on the Council only once (1955-1956) with no other candidatures over the years. Its decisive defeat in this election has been interpreted as a signal of the international community's concerns about Tehran's standing in the UN and its disregard of Security Council resolutions.

6.(C) Turkey made this campaign a national priority, deploying additional ambassadors to New York for lobbying, and being able to depend on an Organization of Islamic Council support base. Further, Turkey emphasized its "crossroads" identity spanning geographic regions, cultures, and religions. Its involvement in peacekeeping activities has it ranked 28th in military and police contributors to UN missions; as well it has been actively involved in UN counter-terrorism initiatives. It was last on the Council in 1961.

17. (C) As for Iceland and Austria, there were expectations of a tighter race, and perhaps a second ballot runoff. Iceland has never served on Council, its candidacy had traction with small countries, and it claimed to have received more promises of support than delivered. Iceland launched a campaign highlighting its independent-minded foreign policy and tried to identify with states anxious about the immediate effects of climate change. Its Foreign Minister, Ingibjorg Solrun Gisladottir, appeared vibrant, shaking hands at the entrance of the Assembly Hall - merely a few weeks since brain surgery. According to many observers - and contrary to the FM's post-election press comments - Iceland's recent major financial meltdown seriously deflated its bid. The Icelandic loss also dashed the aspirations of Denmark, Norway, Finland, and Sweden who presented Iceland's bid as a Nordic candidature.

18. (C) Austrian campaign efforts were consistent and considerable, as well, and hosting UN agencies such as the International Atomic Energy Association gave it an added talking point.

19. (U) Mexico was uncontested in its bid. It served on the Council in 1946-47, 1980-81, and 2002-03. Uganda enjoyed the endorsement of the African Union and then of its regional group. It served a split term in 1966 and a full term 1981-82.

Khalilzad